

## Doctoral Study Programmes

Doctoral study marks an interface between educational and research missions of a university. Doctoral candidates acquire skills and knowledge related to the specific subject of their dissertation, laying the ground for their own scientific profile, while at the same time making a contribution to the advancement of knowledge in their respective field of study. This interplay between doctoral programmes and teaching and research activities at a university is a key factor to be considered in the accreditation of doctoral programmes. If the requirements for accreditation of doctoral programmes are not high enough, lacking quality can have a negative impact on future teaching and research at the university. On the other hand, doctoral programmes can also help transform an institution into a university actively engaged in research by training a young generation of scientists and scholars.

Taking into account the above considerations, the accreditation of doctoral programmes must comply with the following criteria in addition to fulfilling the general accreditation requirements laid down in the University Accreditation Act and in the basic criteria of the Austrian Accreditation Act.

### Academic Staff

Sufficient academic permanent staff with adequate qualifications (post-doctoral thesis or equivalent qualification), recognized research activities and experience in advising doctoral candidates is required. The prerequisite for independent advising of doctoral candidates is a teaching license (*habilitation* in Austria) in an academic field. In interdisciplinary doctoral programmes, there must be academic faculty with adequate qualification in all areas of study involved in the programme.

The permanent academic staff must be qualified to perform teaching and advising activities required by doctoral programmes for the planned number of doctoral candidates in addition to all other teaching, research and administrative tasks. A maximum of 5-6 doctoral candidates is seen as the recommended number for ensuring an adequate mentoring relation.

### Research

The high standard of doctoral study programmes must be ensured by the academic profile and recognized research activities of the academic staff. In establishing a doctoral study program it is necessary to create a stimulating, dynamic research setting to ensure intensive

interactions between the academic staff pursuing research, interdisciplinary work and cooperation between the university and outside institutions. The university must provide a well-established research setting for discipline-related research activities as well as documented research findings in publications.

**Duration**

According to § 54 para 4 UG 2002 the duration of doctoral degree programmes is at least three years. The degree programme may be designated as a “Doctor of Philosophy” programme, and the academic degree of “Doctor of Philosophy”, abbreviated as “PhD”, awarded for it.

With the start of the winter term 2009/2010 the public universities are no longer allowed to enrol students for doctoral degree programmes that have less than three years minimum duration of study.

Since private universities have to conform to international standards the ÖAR considers these European developments to be relevant for the accreditation of doctoral degree programme of the private universities.

The ÖAR therefore assumes that new applications for a doctoral degree programme follow the European specifications, as they are expressed as well in the University Act 2002.

Already existing doctoral programmes do not need to change for the rest of the accreditation period but have to be converted in the course of the reaccreditation.